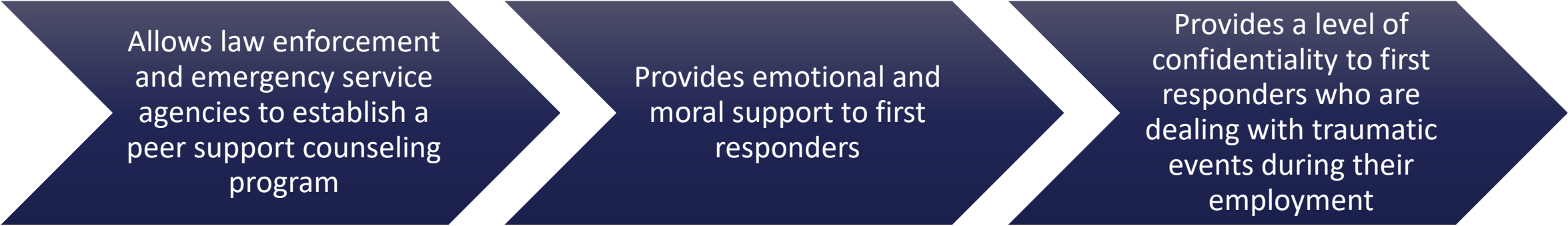


# House Bill 15

“An Act relating to peer support counseling programs for law enforcement agencies, emergencies service providers, and the Department of Corrections.”

- Sponsor: Representative Andy Josephson

# HB 15



Allows law enforcement  
and emergency service  
agencies to establish a  
peer support counseling  
program

Provides emotional and  
moral support to first  
responders

Provides a level of  
confidentiality to first  
responders who are  
dealing with traumatic  
events during their  
employment

# Peer Support

Peer Support  
Programs Provide:

- Reflective listening
- Ways to cope
- Emotional support
- Team cohesion
- Healthy behavior modeling

# Other States with Peer Support Programs for EMS and Law Enforcement

1. Illinois – Establishes a peer support program, provides for confidentiality.
2. Idaho – Establishes a guarantee of confidentiality for peer support programs in EMS/Law enforcement. Relates to evidence, defines terms, to prohibit disclosure of certain communications, to provide exceptions, to provide that certain disclosures are subject to the rules of the Idaho Supreme Court.
3. Indiana – Relates to peer support services and critical incident stress management services (CISM), provides for confidentiality.
4. Louisiana – Provides for the Peace Officer and Public Safety Personnel Peer Support and Mental Health Wellness Act
5. South Dakota - Makes an appropriation for and the establishment of peer support and critical incident stress management training for first responder organizations, declares an emergency.
6. Texas – Relates to a mental health program that includes peer-to-peer counseling for certain law enforcement personnel, allows for contracting with an institution of higher education that has appropriate expertise in mental health or law enforcement to develop the peer support network.

# Sobering Statistics

69% of EMS providers report not having time to recover after stressful event

30% of first responders develop depression and PTSD, among other things, compared to 20% in the general population

Two studies illustrated that suicidal ideation is experienced by EMS at alarming rates. 28% feel that life is not worth living. 10.4% percent have experienced a serious suicidal ideation.

In another, it was found that having both EMS and firefighting duties was associated with a sixfold increase in the likelihood of reporting a suicide attempt as compared to firefighting alone.

# Why this bill?

- This bill is an important step in addressing the stigma around the mental health of public safety professionals, by providing them a safe space to talk about their mental health.
- The confidentiality aspect is crucial, as it allows employees to come forward and be open about their experiences.
- Incidentally, this bill will contribute to workforce retention. As these individuals are expected to do more with less, they will often be placed in dangerous, unpredictable situations. The need for peer support systems will be crucial in ensuring that law enforcement and EMS will have long, healthy careers.



Questions?